

SOURWOOD

Oxydendrum arboreum (L.) DC.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Sorrel-tree, Sour gum, Lily of the valley tree.

FORM: Usually about 25 feet tall, trunk 8 inches in diameter, may reach height 50-60 feet, diameter of 20 inches, trunk usually straight, slender, bears narrow-topped crown.

BARK: Rather thick, roughened by fissures separating rounded ridges covered with thin scales, on old trunks grayish tinged with red.

TWIGGS: Rather slender, first yellowish-green, later orange-colored and reddish-brown, lenticels numerous, oblong, elevated.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, oblong, stalked, acute at apex, wedge-shaped at base, margin serrate, 5-7 inches long, 1 1/2-2 1/2 inches wide, smooth.

FLOWERS: Appear about late July or early August; white, perfect, about 1/3 inch long, with cylindrical corolla and borne in racemes 6-8 inches long.

FRUIT: A 5-sided, 5-valved capsule, terminated by a persistent style; capsules often persistent in clusters that may be a foot in length.

WINTER BUDS: Alternate, axillary, small, partly imbedded in the bark, acute at apex, scales dark red; terminal bud absent.

WOOD: Hard, heavy, compact, reddish-brown with lighter-colored

USES: Pulp. Historical uses: Tool handles.

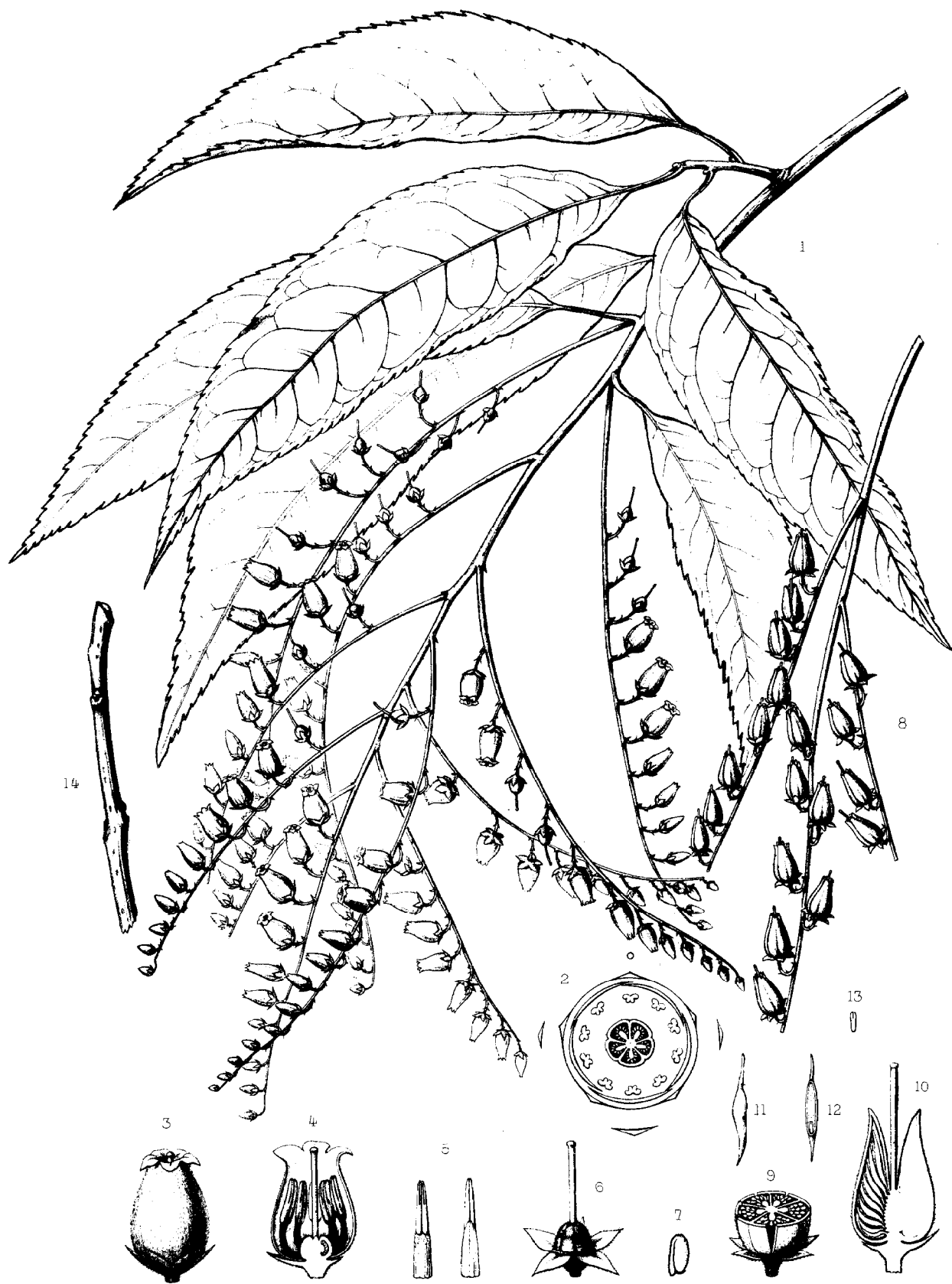
HABITAT: Well-drained soils, common on hillsides, seldom along streams.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: White bell-shaped flowers arranged in racemes resembling lily-of-the-valley; the bitter leaves resemble the peach leaf; bark of older trees resembles that of black gum; winter buds dark red, partly imbedded in the bark.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Very widely distributed over the state.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. A flowering branch | 8. A portion of a fruit |
| 2. Diagram of a flower | 9. Cross section of a fruit |
| 3. A flower | 10. Vertical section of a fruit |
| 4. Vertical section of a flower | 11. A seed enlarged |
| 5. A stamen, front and rear views | 12. Vertical section of a seed |
| 6. A flower, the corolla removed | 13. An ovule |
| 7. An ovule | 14. A winter branchlet |



Oxydendrum arboreum (L.) DC.